

the world. These trees are stunning. They grow about two inches a year. They last for up to 150 years. People don't understand that these trees are so terrific. These trees have been brutalized by these criminals. They chopped this one down. One of my staffers said: Well, maybe they used it for firewood. Well, folks, have you ever tried to start a fire with cantaloupe? You can't burn this. I guess you can burn anything, but you will not stay warm. They are soft inside. It is not something you can burn.

We don't know how old the tree in this picture was, but it was probably 80 or 100 years old. Look at that beautiful tree behind it. It is really unfortunate, but that is what they are doing. They are just destroying these beautiful trees.

One of them who was part of the Oregon crowd had a brand. He went out branding everything with his brand. He stamped his brand on different things that should be protected. This is sad.

I have tried to protect Gold Butte for a long time, and the reason we haven't been able to do anything up to this point is that the Bundy boys and their pals kept everybody off of that property, and that is why I am grateful for the Antiquities Act. Because of this legislation, the Bundys are in jail.

I will reach out to the White House—and there is no guarantee we will get it done, that's for sure—to see if President Obama will protect this area. He has the authority, as any President does, to stop this sort of destruction and stop it now. Threats to our public lands are threats to our economy, our environment, and our culture. When we preserve our lands, we preserve America, and that is what we are trying to do: Preserve this beautiful place.

I say again: Is this worth protecting and preserving? Of course it is.

Mr. President, please announce the Senate business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 636, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune/Nelson amendment No. 3464, in the nature of a substitute.

Thune (for Gardner) amendment No. 3460 (to amendment No. 3464), to require the FAA Administrator to consider the operational history of a person before authorizing the person to operate certain unmanned aircraft systems.

Thune amendment No. 3512 (to amendment No. 3464), to enhance airport security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we have the FAA bill on the floor. I would like to discuss some of the amendments that are proposed and, hopefully, a couple that we will be voting on this morning. There are a couple of amendments—one offered by Senator THUNE on behalf of himself and this Senator, the ranking member of the Commerce Committee, and another offered by Senator HEINRICH. Both amendments deal with the issue of security but in different arenas.

Let me explain. The Thune-Nelson amendment applies to the question of perimeter security, of allowing employees to get into an airport—not the sterile area controlled by TSA, although, as I will explain, it can definitely affect the sterile area as well. On the other hand, the Heinrich amendment addresses security in the areas where passengers bunch up outside of TSA security, such as in a queue-up line going through TSA security, or passengers bunched up at the ticket counters, checking in their luggage.

Either way, as we saw from the experience of the Brussels airport explosion, those are very tempting targets for a terrorist. Therefore, the proposal in the Heinrich amendment, which I would commend to the Senate, is to increase the level of security, particularly with what are called VIPR teams, which, in essence, are not only at airports but at seaports and at transportation hubs.

Remember that in Brussels there was a bombing in one of the train stations as well. So we need to increase the surveillance and the security there, including dogs. As a matter of fact, our K-9 friends are some of the best that we have when it comes to protecting us because their noses are attuned to being able to sniff out the explosives that you cannot detect with metal detectors or with the AIT machine that we go through where we hold up our hands to see if we have anything on us.

It can detect if you have a package, if you have an explosive that is somewhere in one of your body cavities. It is going to be very, very difficult.

Dogs, because of their God-given sense of smell, can detect that. A properly trained dog is just amazing to watch. Now, interestingly, concurrently there is research going on at NIST, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, for an artificial dog nose, a mechanical item or a piece of software and hardware that would actually do the same job.

But that has not been perfected yet. That is going to be really interesting to see what they come up with. This Senator will report to the Senate later on that. But for the time being, the Heinrich amendment, which I hope we will vote on this morning, is concerned with that security that we have seen as a result of the Brussels bombing.

We certainly want to enhance security in our airports. Thank goodness we have the intelligence apparatus that we do in this country to be able to smoke out the terrorist before he ever does his dirty deed. It is more difficult for them to do it here in America than it is in Europe because of the alienation of those communities that then harbor the terrorists. We see the result in Brussels as well as Paris. That is the Heinrich amendment. That is a broad characterization of it, but basically that is the thrust.

The Thune-Nelson amendment is going at the perimeter security. OK, think Egypt and the Russian airliner. It was an airport employee who smuggled the bomb onto the plane, not as a passenger but as an airport employee. Think the Atlanta airport, 2 years ago. In a gunrunning scheme over 3 months, over 100 guns were transported from Atlanta to New York.

The police in New York could not figure out how all of these guns were getting on the streets in New York. They kept checking the trains, and they kept checking the interstates. They could not figure it out. Here is how they did it. An employee at the Atlanta airport—because Atlanta was not checking their employees—would smuggle the guns in. Then that employee had access in the terminal to get into the sterile area—the TSA sterile area—and he would go into the men's room, meet the passenger who had already come through security and was clean, and give the guns to him to put them in his empty knapsack, his backpack. This employee, over the course of 17 times, over 3 months, smuggled over 100 guns. Thank goodness it was a criminal enterprise, not a terrorist, because you can imagine what would have happened.

The Miami International Airport 10 years ago figured this out. What they did was, instead of having hundreds of entry points into the airport for airport employees in a very large airport like Atlanta, in Miami they boiled it down to a handful. There the employees went through similar security that passengers do to check to see if they had any weapons. They had a special identification card that they would have to stick into an electronic machine and put in their code, which was another way of checking to make sure that the employee was who they said they were.

Miami solved the problem after having a problem with drugs 10 years ago. Interestingly, in the interim, the Orlando International Airport, likewise, about 4 years ago had a similar drug problem. They did the same thing. They boiled down hundreds of entry points for airport employees to a handful. They had those checks. I have gone to see those checks at those two airports. That is exactly how they do it.

The fact is, we have 300 airports in the United States. There were only two that were doing this kind of perimeter checking. Atlanta then became the